

reeds and *khas khas*<sup>1</sup>; in the middle of this grass a *lota* full of water was placed. In the case of a widow marrying I was told that instead of a plain bamboo a *gaidala* or bamboo with a rough iron spear head was used. This *gaidala* is the implement used by Kanjars and allied tribes of the "hunting state" for digging for *khas khas* roots and killing wild animals. To return to the first day's ceremonies; after this *Mundha* has been set up, oil is distributed to everybody taking part or interested in the ceremony. In the next five days the marriage ceremony proceeds to the extent that everybody meets in the evenings, and a certain amount of feasting and drinking goes on which is supposed to include or conclude with the bride and bridegroom walking once round the *Mundha*. On the seventh day all the really important events take place and the details are remarkably interesting. No doubt in various camps, as Hindu influence increases and as time goes on, the ceremonial is varied according to the inclinations and tastes of individual Chowdhris (Headmen) and their *Panch* or counsel, but for all that there is strong evidence of the survival of many primitive customs.

On the seventh day the bridegroom and his attendants proceed to the hut or encampment of the bride carrying with them two *chattis* or *gharrás* of earthenware—filled with water—and after an immense amount of discussion and issuing of instructions by every one who has ever been at a wedding before, and wrangling and shouting as a sort of preliminary to emphasize the importance of what is about to take place, the first part of the ceremony begins with what is called *Cowri Khélná*—playing with cowri shells. First one *ghara* of water is placed in front of the bridegroom and the other before the bride—they are said to be "given to them." The water from the bride's *ghara* is then mixed with the water in the bridegroom's *ghara* and *vice versa*. The eldest "son-in-law" of the *góth* or sept of the bridegroom then places seven *cowri* shells in each *ghará*. It should be noted that these people are

<sup>1</sup> The following note is from "Hobson-Jobson," Yule and Burnell, p. 219: "Pers. *H. Khaskhas*. Proper Hindi names are *usír* and *lāla*. The roots of a grass which abounds in the drier parts of India, viz. "*Andropogon muricatus* (Retz), used in India during the hot dry winds to make screens which are kept constantly wet in the window openings, and the fragrant evaporation from which greatly cools the house . . . These roots are well known in France by the name *Vetyrer*, which is the Tamil name *Vetliveru* (*ver* = root)."

Digging for khaskhas roots and making *tatties* therefrom is to this day one of the principal of the "peaceful" avocations of those people in Delhi—and I fervently hope that whoever has the ordering of the hundreds of *tatties* which will now be required for the offices and residences of officials in the new capital will place his orders direct with the manufacturer, the Gehara Sanjar, and not through some humbugging middleman.

divided up into exogamous septs so that the "son-in-law" of the bridegroom's sept necessarily belongs to another sept and is not a blood relation—see *Exogamous Septs of the Gehara Kanjars*, J. & P. A.S.B, vol. VII, No. 10. The bride and bridegroom are now seated with their respective *gharas* in front of them and at a signal they simultaneously make a grab for the *cowries* in the water. If the bride 'grabs' more *cowries* out of her *ghara* than the bridegroom does out of his she is declared to have *jitgiá*—or won, and the winner is greeted with applause and much laughter. The suggestion of course is obvious and the idea simple—that if the bride for instance 'wins' she will have the upper hand all through life, and *vice versa*; but as the grabbings are repeated seven times the chances are very even so that in the end the honours are divided and the "indications" usually are that the marriage will be a happy one. The couple are now taken apart by their respective relations and are bathed in the water from their *gharas*—and are then dressed in clean clothes. And now comes the second item of the ceremonies; a crown of grass or *khas* made to roughly represent the crests of a peacock and peahen are put on the heads of the bridegroom and bride respectively and they are acclaimed loudly as the *Mor* (peacock) and *Morni* (peahen). As these characters and thus arrayed, the bride is hoisted on to the shoulders of the "eldest son-in-law" of her family and the bridegroom is similarly mounted on to the shoulders of the eldest son-in-law in his family. The crowd forms a ring round and a mock combat takes place. The bride and bridegroom are each armed with an imitation *Khanda* or large knife made of *sirkhi*<sup>1</sup> (*Saccharum sara* Roxb.) in one hand and a *chunni* or *cháj*, a sort of sieve made also of *sirkhi*, in the other. This *cháj* represents a shield. A few grains of rice are thrown into each *cháj* and in the air. The *Khanda* is, I am told, a weapon the tribes' forefathers used for decapitating cattle. After a few rounds the combat concludes and the bride and bridegroom are led to the *Mundha* or bamboo pole at the foot of which a fire is kindled with *ghi* and *dhup* or *lobán* (incense). The clothes of the contracting parties are tied together in a knot and the now united couple solemnly walk round the fire seven times. After the combat all horse-play ceases and the subsequent ceremonies are treated with proper solemnity. Having walked round the *Mundha* and fire for the seventh time the bridegroom leads his bride to his house or 'camp' where the knots are "united." This practically concludes the ceremony. Except that after the knots are tied the couple proceed to the bride's camp or house and "take salaams." The bride

<sup>1</sup> *Sirkhi-wallah*—"the reedmat folk"—is a common descriptive title applied to an aggregate of tribes of a gypsy-like character all over the United Provinces.

groom here is formally presented with one rupee, whereupon he orders wine to be brought—and all the Panch assemble and accounts are made of the actual expenses incurred by the bridegroom. In these accounts are included the cost of a hog which the bridegroom has had to provide during the ceremonies. As an alternative to a hog he may give Rs. 10. This hog or the Rs. 10 is distributed as follows :—

$\frac{1}{2}$  of the hog or Rs. 5 goes to the bride's party,

$\frac{1}{4}$  of the hog or Rs. 2-8 goes to Panchayat, and

$\frac{1}{4}$  of the hog or Rs. 2-8 goes to the bridegroom's party.

These are recognized fees and are called *Khhari Tekha*. When the accounts have finally been "found," the total is recorded as being the price the husband shall recover from the correspondent in the event of a divorce.

There is one little detail of the ceremony which is interesting to record. On to the bamboo pole or *Mundha* very often a wooden representation of a parrot is tied. Now a parrot is one of the general totems of the tribe and is with the dog about the only live creature which they may not and do not kill or eat.

10. A Comparative Vocabulary of the Language of  
European Gypsies or Romnichal, and  
Colloquial Hindustani.

By W. KIRKPATRICK.

According to the Shah Nameh of Firdausi it was during the fourth or fifth century A.D. that Behram Gour (A.D. 420) received into Persia from India some ten or twelve thousand musicians of both sexes who were known as *Lūrīs*. It had been reported to him that the indigent classes of his kingdom drank wine without music and to "remedy the privation complained of" Behram Gour sent to Shankal, King of Kanauj, for "ten thousand male and female who play upon the lute." There appears to have been an attempt to settle these *Lūrīs* in Persia, each individual being given a cow and an ass and assigned an appropriate residence, just as to-day we are attempting to settle the Doms near Gorakhpur or the Haburas near Aligarh.

But these *Lūrīs*, even fourteen hundred years ago, showed no liking for a settled life; they "consumed all their wheat as well as their cows and toward the end of the year were left shamelessly destitute. The king rebuked them for their lavish conduct and then dismissed them with an order that taking their asses they should load them with their chattels and support themselves by means of their songs and the strumming of their silken bows." The *Lūrīs* agreeably to this mandate "now wander about the world seeking employment, associating with dogs and wolves, and thieving on the road by day and by night." Thus wrote Firdausi nine hundred years ago!

The Gypsies in Persia to this day are called *Lūrīs*. Another Arabian historian, Hamza of Ispahan, we have it on the authority of De Goeje confirms this fifth-century *Lūrī* migration. Hamza appears to have written some fifty years earlier than Firdausi, and this author relates that Behram Gour caused 10,000 musicians called *Zott* to be sent from India to Persia. And *Zott* is the name by which Gypsies are known in Damascus at the present day.<sup>1</sup> Elliott, "History of India," p. 465, described these *Zotts* as *Jats* and says many were found in Irak, Syria and Mesopotamia and were soon changed into the *Jatano* or *Gitano*, the Gypsies of Modern Europe! The

<sup>1</sup> See "Contribution to the History of the Gypsies" by M. J. De Goeje—in MacRitchie's "Gypsies of India."

Zotts or Jats in Turkey who are also known as Tchinjane we may take to be the same as the Zingani, Zingari or Zigeuner and are identical with the Persian Lūrīs who in Palestine are called *Zatts* or *Nawari* or *Nauri* or *Nuri*. From here the gypsiologist will trace the migration to Western Asia and South-East Europe, and we finally have definite proof of the location of Gypsies in Europe for the first time in Hungary in 1417.<sup>1</sup> From this date we hear authoritatively of the Zigeuner or Zingaro or Gypsy race spreading all over Europe into Roumania, Wallachia, Roumelia, Bulgaria and Transylvania and all speaking a veritable Gypsy language.

“They are all so alike,” says Borrow, speaking of various European Gypsy dialects, “that he who speaks one of them can make himself very well understood by those who speak any of the rest.”

Although I do not accept the linguistic test as by any means an infallible test of pedigree, it is no mere assumption to ascribe the obviously Oriental, if not actually Indian, origin of European Romnichal to the Lūrī migration mentioned by Firdausi.

I do not pretend that the comparative list of words I have here collated is any more than a revision of similar vocabularies which are familiar to anyone interested in Gypsy lore, but I have, I believe, identified a certain number of words which appear to have been unnoticed by either Lieutenant Irvine in his paper “On the similitude between the Gypsy and Hindi languages” which appeared in the “Transactions of the Bombay Literary Society of Bombay, 1819,” or by Colonel John Staples Harriott in a paper which he read before this Society in 1822 on the “Oriental Origin of the Gypsies.” In his paper Colonel Harriott gives a “Comparative vocabulary of the Gypsy “Dialect with a variety of synonyms deduced chiefly from “the Hindu, or Language of Hindustan.” This is the most comprehensive and knowledgeable comparative list of Romnichal and Hindustani or Urdu words I have yet come across.

In a collection of words of the language of the familiar Indian Gypsies known as Kanjars (see J.A.S.B., vol. vii, No. 6) I have come across three or four words which I find to be common to Romnichal and the Argot of the Kanjars alone and to no other languages or dialect that I know.

*Romnichal.*

*Mailla, Myla*, an ass.  
*Jookal, Jukel*, a dog.  
*Lubni* or *Loobni* or *Luvni*,  
 a wench.

*Kanjar.*

*Mail*, a horse.  
*Jhukal*, a dog.  
*Loobhar* or *Lubhar*, a woman.

<sup>1</sup> See “Contribution to the History of the Gypsies” by M. J. De Goeje—in MacRitchie’s “Gypsies of India.”